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ABSTRACT

In this lesson, students work in teams, role-playing a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in rural Africa. Teams focus on four goals: (1) grow more food; (2) develop water resources; (3) improve health services; and (4) protect the environment. Each student team is assigned to one of five regions in Africa. Teams research their regions and develop a 10-year plan to achieve the four goals. Students are provided with background information, detailed instructions, on-line resources, and reflection questions. The teacher's notes describe the unit's purpose, explain the application of history/social science, language arts, and information literacy standards, and suggest teaching strategies. (BB)

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Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World

Project Helping Hands

10th Grade Lesson by Leanne Westphal

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Project Helping Hands

You are part of regional team from Africare, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in rural Africa. Your four goals in this organization are to : (1) grow more food; (2) develop water resources; (3) improve health services; and (4) protect the environment.

The United Nations has grant money to give towards developing Africa. Since it only has a limited amount of money to give; your organization has divided Africa into five regions. Your team is assigned a region for which to develop a ten year plan that will help the people to meet our four goals and not economically hurt the countries of your region. In class you have been studying the gold/salt trade of the Middle Kingdoms. This task will help you to see the trade routes and products in Africa today.

The Task

You and your team must gather data and create a ten year economic development plan that meets the goals of Africare. To do this you will look at present day economic information and then look for what is missing from your goals in this region.

Once you've gathered your data, your team will create a ten year plan for your region. Your team will present to a group from the Economic Council of the United Nations. Be prepared to back up your ten year plan with facts.

The Process

To establish your ten year plan you need to look at these characteristics and other economic indicators for your region.

- What are the natural resources in your region? -
- Both already developed and not yet developed?
- What type of climate or weather is in your region? -
  *How does that help or hinder you?
- What kinds of transportation exist for imports/exports?
  *What are the present imports/exports?
- What is the present day GNP?
- Are their cash crops and/or food crops?

After you have your data, develop a presentation that includes everyone in your regional group. Use the best qualities from each member.

Make a presentation no longer than 15 minutes. After all presentations, the U.N. committee will pick the region with the best ten year plan to fund.

Resources

These resources are a good starting place for finding out economic information and characteristics of countries in your region.

The World Fact Book 1995
http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html
Africa Web Links: an Annotated Resource List ©
http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Home_Page/WWW_Links.html
Country-Specific Pages for Africa
http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Home_Page/Country.html
Country-Specific Information
http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/K-12/menu_EduKNTR.html

The following other sites contain more specific information.

Climate Prediction Center - African Desk
http://nic.fb4.noaa.gov/products/african_desk/index.html
EcoNews Africa Front Door
http://www.web.apc.org/~econews/
Issues on African Economy and Telematics
http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/ECA/menu_EcaTelem.html

Examples of Other Resources

The World Almanac - any recent edition or CD Rom Version
Goode's World Atlas
Newspaper or magazines with recent information of events in Africa

Learning Advice

To do a good job on your presentation to the economic council of the U.N. you really need to believe in your ten year plan. Make it something that could work and would improve the quality of life for the Africans living in your region. Try to look at your plan from many points of view: i.e. - an environmentalist, an economist, a politician, a wealthy farmer, a poor farmer, an industrialist, the media, a taxpayer, etc. It's hard to satisfy everyone, but work to compromise and develop arguments for what you believe in.

Since this is a team activity, divide the tasks and responsibilities among all members. Remember that everyone has a talent that makes them valuable to the group. Find everyone's strengths and take advantage of them.

There are different styles of learning. In your presentation try to meet the needs of all members of the committee. Don't just talk - use visual aids, hands on demonstrations, etc. to catch their attention and convince them your plan is the best.

Evaluation

This project is evaluated through the thoroughness of your research, your group's

presentation to the council, and your individual reflection sheet. As a class we will develop a rubric to help your team focus their presentation.

Conclusion

Thinking back to what you learned about the gold/salt trade during the Middle Ages in Africa, do you feel this much thinking went into developing the economies of the past? What has caused the changes , if any?

How can we help Third World countries to develop more on their own without putting American values into their cultures?

Reflection

Looking back over your regional group's research and presentation answer the following questions to yourself. Pick one to write out an answer to turn in for part of your evaluation.

1. What part of the task was the hardest for you as an individual to complete? Why?
2. Who in your group helped you the most? the least? why/how?
3. What were the strategies you used to gather your information?
4. Is your plan good enough to really work? Would you be willing to send it to Africare?

Teacher Notes

Lesson Purpose: To have the students relate the economic lessons learned from studying the Middle Kingdoms of Africa to today's economic situation in Africa.

Goals: The student will:

- learn about existing problems
- determine the missing needs of a society
- understand how trade centers are developed

Information Literacy Skills:

- Students can identify potential sources of information
- Students learn to recognize point of view from facts
- Students organize information to solve an existing problem
- Students recognize that accurate and complete information will result in better group decisions
- Students will organize material for a presentation
- Students will use problem solving skills to formulate an economic plan

History Social-Science Content Standards

7.4 (follow-up only) Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the sub-Saharan civilizations of Ghana and Mali in Medieval Africa.

10.10 Students analyze instances of nation-building in the contemporary world in two of the following regions or countries: The Middle East, Africa, Mexico and other parts of Latin America, or China in terms of challenges in the region, including its geopolitical , cultural, military, and economic significance and the international relationships in which it is involved.

History and Social-Sciences Analysis Skills

Chronological or Spatial Thinking

Students use a variety of maps and documents to interpret human movement, including major patterns of domestic and international migration; changing environmental preferences and settlement patterns' the frictions that develop between population groups; and the diffusion of ideas, technological innovations, and goods.

Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View

Students evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors' use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.

Historical Interpretation

Students analyze human modifications of landscapes, and examine the resulting

environmental policy issues..

Language Arts Standards

1.0 Listening and Speaking Strategies: Students formulate adroit judgments about oral communication. They deliver focused and coherent presentations of their own that convey clear and distinct perspectives and solid reasoning. They incorporate gestures, tone, and vocabulary tailored to audience and purpose.

2.0 Speaking Applications: Students deliver polished formal and extemporaneous presentations that combine traditional rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion and description. Student speaking demonstrates a command of standard American English and the organization and delivery strategies outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0.

Length of Lesson: Five 45-60 minute periods

Resources or materials needed:

- almanacs from recent years
- glossary of economic terms and their definitions
- atlases
- patience

*Amnesty International publishes a CD Rom (only $10) that has good information on African countries.

*A good book that I enjoyed reading, and learning more about Africa is called Soul to Soul by John Ballard.

Managing the Lesson:

Lesson sequence:

Students are put in five regional teams each seeking out information for a presentation to Africare. The best solutions for a ten year economic development plan will be funded.

Some Supporting Questions:

- How do you impose "American" values on and African society.
- How do you develop economic policies that please all special interest groups?

Students Product:

Student groups make a presentation (up to 15 minutes) to a fake panel (consisting of adults or students from another class) of their region's ten year economic plan. Visual aids and creativity of presentation are regarded highly if they add to your plan.

Adaptations for Special Needs Students:

Set the groups up to reflect the diversity of your class. Every group needs a high reader and a creative child. Using Howard Gardner's ideas your groups should have students with various strengths.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Math- Statistics and graphing

Language Arts- Economic Vocab world and their definitions, writing reflections of experience

Science- Looking at climate and ecological issues

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